THE SECOND DAY.

28th February 1922.

The Assembly met at 11-30 A. M. on Tuesday, the 28th February 1922.

The consideration of the subjects, as *per* the list distributed to the Members on the previons day, was taken up.

I. FINANCE.

1. State finance with special reference to the need for an Executive Council.

Mr. T. Kumara Pillai (Member, Kalkulam Taluk) speaking on the increase of the revenues of Travancore during the periods from 1040 to 1082, 1083 to 1089, from 1090 to 1095 and from 1096 to the present day, observed that the policy of the Government had, of late, been to raise as much money as possible without due care being had for the welfare of the subjects of the State. The Member remarked that during the period from 1040 to 1082, only as much revenue was realised as was necessary for meeting the recurring expenses of the State and for laying by a reserve to meet unforeseen contingencies. The period from 1083 onwards, however, witnessed an increase in the revenue out of all proportion to the needs of the administration and it was effected by burdening the people with additional taxation, the period from 1096 being the most noteworthy in this respect. Objection was taken to the recent levy of fees from markets and evening bazaars, to the increase of assessment, *tharavila* and *thadivila* in respect of *puduval* lands and the rise in the *kuthagapattom* rents on trees, the tariff values of timber, Anchal rates, school fees, copying and process fees, and the duty on tobacco, to the levy of tolls, and to the orders issued by the Government to Municipal Councils to impose the taxes under Regulation V of 1095. He laid special stress on the hardship which the poor people suffered on account of the imposition of fees in respect of evening bazaars, aggravated by the high-handed action of the lessees of the right of collecting such fees, and requested the abolition of the said impost.

The Member was of opinion that the reduction of Divisions and taluks in the State reported to be under contemplation was not advisable on the ground that, while the saving of expenditure which such reduction might effect was nominal, the resultant public inconvenience would be substantial. There were other ways of finding funds, such as by arranging for the cement manufactured in British India being used by the P. W. D. in the State, as was being done in the Madras Presidency. Every one was agreed that a reasonable increase in the revenue was necessary to carry on a progressive administration. But the only prayer of the people was that the revenue so raised should be first utilised to meet their essential requirements. He pointed out that the closing balance of the State was diminishing and that this raised apprehension in the public mind that further taxes might be imposed.

The Member regretted the absence of a steady and uniform policy in the matter of public expenditure and observed that the people suffered considerable hardship on that account. The Government's policy in the participation of the Cochin Harbour scheme and their vacillation in pushing through the construction of the Alleppey-Shertallai canal were quoted as instances in point.

The Member next referred to the construction of minor irrigation works and observed that the importance of such works to the people was not sufficiently realised by Government, as was evident from the fact that the allotment for the purpose was dwindling year after year, while ample provision was being made for

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the construction of buildings of doubtful utility. From time immemorial the taluks of Tovala, Agastiswaram, Eraniel and Kalkulam were exempted from the payment of contribution towards the expenditure on account of the construction or maintenance of minor irrigation works, and this practice was re-affirmed by Government in their order No. 6757/L. R & F., dated the 22nd June 1913. In the circumstances, it was unjustifiable on the part of the Government to require those taluks also to pay a portion of the expenditure on minor irrigation works. He prayed that no such arrangement might be brought into force, although individual ryots here and there might have agreed to it in a spirit of despair. He then described the activities of Assistant Tahsildars in the matter of removal of encroachments on *poramboke* lands and pointed out that the so-called *porambokes* on the banks of rivers, etc., were not really so, and that they should be registered in the names of the owners of adjoining lands. In respect of the general question of enhancement of the material prosperity of the people, it was the Member's view that natives of the country should be appointed as Dewans, as they alone could be expected to be conversant with the habits of the people and realise their wants and wishes. Foreign Dewans who were appointed from the British Indian Service strove to act up to the standards of the administration there, which could not be imported into Indian States without destroying their individuality and traditions. To preserve the individuality of the State unimpaired, to have collective deliberation and responsibility, to secure continuity of policy and to act as a check on the autocratic ways inseparable from the system of one-man administration, the Member pleaded that it was essential that the State should have an Executive Council to help the Dewan. Lastly, the Member animadverted in some detail on the educational policy of the Government resulting in the recent enhancement of fees and the consequent strike of school-boys.

Dewan's reply.—I must express my thanks to you for the very kind way in which you have responded to my wishes to keep to the time allowed by the rules. One grave defect in the existing practice regarding the S. M. P. Assembly is that, in regard to subjects for discussion, at any rate in regard to subjects of such great importance as the one about which you have chosen to speak, Government do not get any statement in advance of the points which you propose to raise in your discussion, and Government are accordingly at a great disadvantage inasmuch as they do not know what the points are that they have to meet. I must therefore plead my inability to give a detailed answer at present to your valuable discussion in the course of which you have touched on many important points of detail. Further, finance is a subject so vast and important that I do not think that it would be unfair to you if I do not make an immediate reply in regard to it. Yesterday, in my address, I referred to the policy that the Government are pursuing in regard to finance. I am not in a position to add anything to it just now. The several points, especially that relating to the evening bazaars you have referred to in your speech, will receive consideration. It is quite possible that in regard to the carrying out of the measures which are promulgated by Government, there are many defects. The particular defects pointed out by you in the administration of Governmental measures will be looked into.

2. State Finance.

Mr. N. Kunjan Pillai (Member, Municipal Council, Colachel) observed that the abnormal increase in the revenues of the State from 1080 M. E. had been brought about by imposing additional burdens on the people and not by a profitable exploitation of the resources of the State such as forests, etc. The amount of revenue as distributed among the people stood at Rs. 5 per head in Travancore, whereas it was only Rs. 3½ in Hyderabad and Rs. 3 in Mysore. The people of this country were very poor, 66 per cent of them being agriculturists; and their average annual income as *per* the figures of the Census of 1911 was only Rs. 14 per head against Rs. 30 in British India. The activities in the direction of company promotion in the State by no means went to show that the people were well-off. People took shares in Companies by selling or pledging their properties, lured by advertisements as to the rates of dividend, etc., and it was only when an

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